

Fiske House
Chelmsford, Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-318

HABS
MASS.

A-CHELM

6.

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Massachusetts

Historic American Buildings Survey
Frank Chouteau Brown, District Officer
76 Chestnut Street, Boston, Mass.

ADDENDUM TO
FISKE HOUSE
Littleton Road & Billerica Road
Chelmsford
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-318

HABS
MAES
9-CHELM,
6-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

APPENDIX TO: FISKE HOUSE

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HABS No. MA-318

Location: Littleton Street and Billerica Road, Chelmsford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.

Significance: The Fiske house is one of the earliest Federal period houses (1798) in North Middlesex County. Prior to its association with the Fiske family, Thomas Moore operated the house as a tavern. Thus, the building's significance lies not only in its architectural form but also in its performance of private and public domestic needs in proximity to the town center (now Chelmsford Center Historic District).

Description: To the Northwest, the Fiske house presents a five bay (front) clapboard facade. Each bay is emphasized by pilasters and punctuated by five windows across the top, mirrored by five openings below. The central bay contains the entry. The entrance door, made of eight panels, stands below a tall arch with keystone, is immediately capped by a fanlight, and has side lights. The six pilasters have molded capitals, which are then topped by an undecorated block. The window lights are six-over-six and each window has shutters. The bays run up into a dentiled cornice. The roof is slate.

To the rear, the five bay facade is masked by a one story addition (an ell). The side facades are brick, and each is three bays deep. In the center bay, a door has been squashed between two windows, together creating the third bay and giving an a-b-a rhythm to the facade. On the Southwest facade, the central bay entrance door is defined by a projecting, flat cornice and is framed by pilasters. The Northeast entry also has pilasters and a flat cornice; however, beneath the cornice line is a fanlight with keystone. A projecting brick belt on each side (Northeast and Southeast facades) suggests the division between the first and second stories. There are four chimneys, two per side. At the attic level, the gable pediments are frame. These gable pediments are punctuated by two windows. Vinyl siding replaced the clapboard in the gable pediments and on the front and rear facades.

The Fiske house outbuildings are a barn with a cupola, a one story well house with a chimney, and two sheds.

History: In 1784 Simeon Spaulding, Jr., bought a half acre lot and house from William Bridge; four years later, Spaulding replaced the Bridge house with a Federal style structure. Unfortunately, the new house proved costly. Spaulding mortgaged the property in 1807. By 1812, he was forced to sell, only to re-purchase his house in 1818. Finally in 1830, Spaulding sold the house to his brother.

After a succession of owners, Thomas Moore bought the property (1835). Moore operated the house as a tavern, which he called the "Lafayette House." The Lafayette House bar, in the Southwest room, has been replaced.

Visiting in 1839, Mr. and Mrs. John Minot Fiske stayed in the Lafayette House. The Fiskes came to Chelmsford with the intention of buying his great-grandfather's house; instead they bought Lafayette House. The Fiske family has owned the "Fiske House" for 137 years (1839-1977). In 1977, the First Bank and Trust Company of Chelmsford purchased the Fiske property. At the time of the National Register for Historic Places nomination, the bank's proposed changes were the removal

of the 1839 wood rail fence, the removal of a stone wall to the East of the house, and the removal of the stone balance wall supporting a southern slope terrace garden. The bank also planned to create three paved drives, each located to the Southeast of the house.

Sources:

Blaine Mallory and Joseph Orfant, "National Register for Historic Places Nomination: Fiske House," National Park Service, 1977. Includes photographs and maps.

Historic Buildings of Massachusetts. edited by John C. Poppeliers. Scribner Historic Building Series. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976. Photographic catalogue of historic buildings, built primarily during the colonial and federal periods.